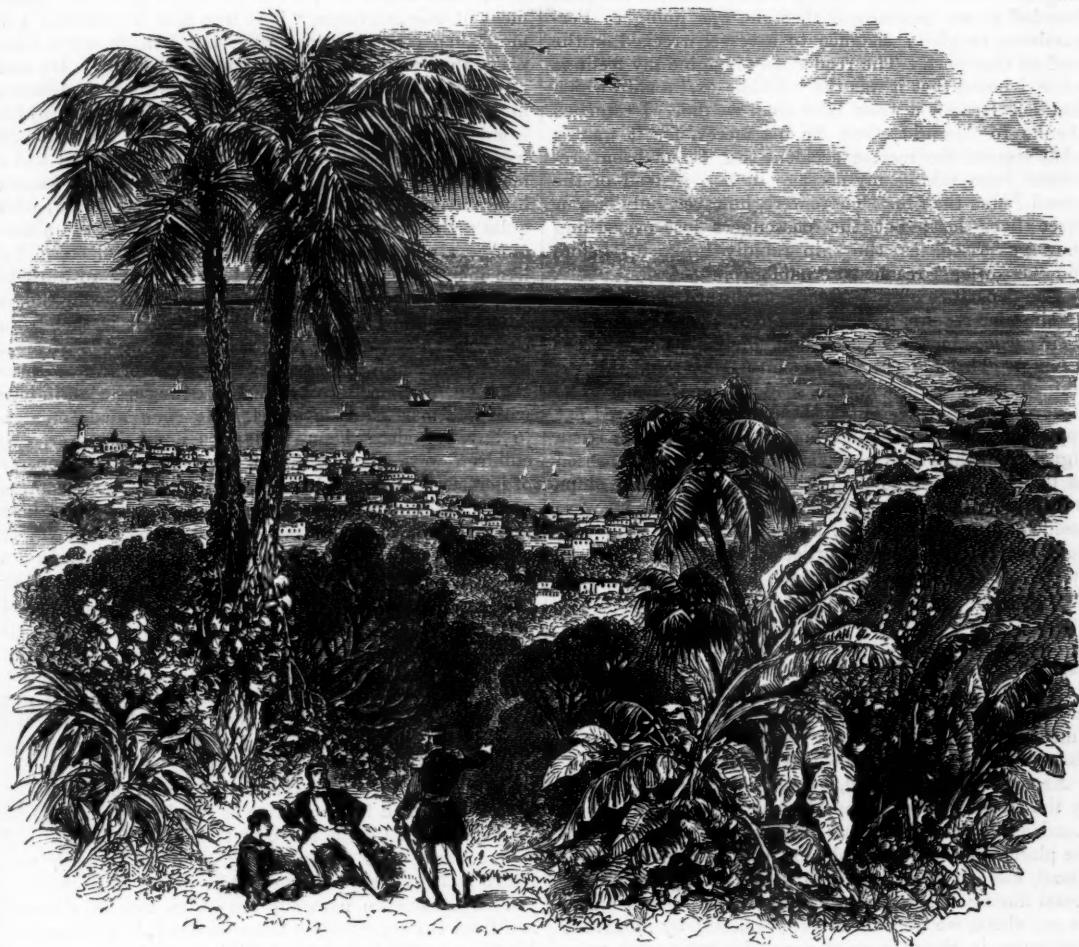


THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cosper.*



VIEW ABOVE BAHIA; ISLAND OF ITAPARICA IN THE DISTANCE.

INCIDENTS ASHORE AND AFLOAT.

III.—AT BAHIA.

THE day we buried our fellow-passenger was one which, for several reasons, is strongly impressed on my memory. Independently of the fact that it was the first time I had ever witnessed a burial at sea, on that day we sighted land, after having run eleven thousand miles without meeting a single sail or seeing aught else but sea and sky.

The scene to us, who had spent nearly three winter months in the dreary latitudes of Cape Horn, was glo-

rious; the sombre tint of the ocean gave place to a sea of dazzling green, which constantly varied its hue as the sun's rays were reflected from a sandy or coral bottom of different depths. In working up the coast, our ship would at times approach quite close to the shore, and from the mast-head with my glass I could obtain occasional glimpses beyond the line of snow-white surf into the glades of the forest beyond; that wonderful Brazilian forest, of which when a boy I had so often read, and into which, with all its marvels of God's handiwork, in tree and bird and flower, I longed to penetrate. The tropical sea teemed with life; the dolphin and silvery

flying-fish flashed past our bows; seaweeds of singular structure, and often of beautiful tints, floated by; while in all directions large whales (though not of the species captured for their oil) were incessantly spouting.

The shore, however, seemed a primeval wilderness; there were no signs of man's presence, except that far out at sea a boat was cruising, with what object we could not divine. All the time we were working up the coast—nearly ten days—one or two of these boats were always in sight. It was not until we anchored in Bahia, where we were obliged to put in, that we found out what they were after.

As we were entering the harbour, we met the "Growler" English steam frigate coming out; and when the pilot boarded us we ascertained that she was going to Pernambuco, to give assistance to a vessel wrecked on the reef off that port. The reader may imagine my feelings when I heard that it was the "Middlesex," a ship which had left Sydney a week later than we did. I returned thanks to Almighty God for his mercy, for it was by what seemed the merest accident that I had been prevented from taking my passage in her, instead of the vessel I was then in. There were, however, only two or three lives lost; but the passengers lost everything they possessed, as the ship rapidly broke up before the "Growler" reached Pernambuco.

The departure of the frigate northward was followed by singular results, no less than five slavers having run their cargoes on the coast within thirty-six hours of her leaving. Three of these came into Bahia; and this explained the presence of the boats we had seen. The slavers, with their freights of human suffering, dared not approach while the English man-of-war was there; but a signal from the shore to the nearest boat could be passed on to the next, and so on until it would reach the ships waiting far out at sea. Several of our passengers were accidentally present at the landing of one of these cargoes, and a pitiful sight they described it to be; for it was one of two vessels which had been hovering off the coast for some time, unable to approach with safety, and the number of deaths and the sufferings of the survivors may be imagined. Our doctor, who, as I mentioned, was a naval surgeon, and had been stationed on the coast of Africa, made our hearts ache with the descriptions he gave of what he had witnessed there; and the very first time I went on shore, I was brought into contact with the system by an incident which vividly impressed me.

As soon as we anchored, and after we had been visited by the health officer, some English gentlemen came on board, and amongst the rest a Mr. S—, a merchant of the place, with whom our doctor, who had often been in Brazil, was acquainted, and to whom the agency of the vessel during her stay was given. Upon preparing to go on shore, we were of course besieged by numerous applicants, in the persons of negro boatmen, each more vociferous than the other; but our agent requested us to give our patronage, while in Bahia, to a man he pointed out to us; and of course we consented.

Pedro was a huge negro, with a very rugged, determined cast of countenance—no beauty, certainly. In fact, he was decidedly a very ugly fellow, and I thought, had we not been guided in our choice, we certainly should not of our own motion have selected him. But it is wrong to judge by the mere outside, as was proved in this case.

Before we had made this arrangement, Mr. Clifford, a fellow passenger, and an old traveller, had inquired from different boatmen how much they would charge, and the sum per head, in English money, was sixpence. Upon reaching the shore, however, our boatman demanded one

shilling, and this of course we resisted; but Pedro, not at all abashed, persisted, and entered into some vehement explanation or justification, which, as it was nearly all Portuguese, with a few English words only here and there, did not convince us. "You sabby!—buy picaniny—you Inglishmans—too much plenty pecune—you sabby, you!—too much money!" Having "too much" money, however, did not in our opinion justify his extortion, and Clifford led the way to the agent's office, which was close to the landing-place, to lay our complaint, Pedro following us, and looking more like a man who had sustained a personal injury at our hands, than one who had been attempting imposition. "Well, gentlemen," said Mr. S—, when he heard Clifford's statement of our grievance, "it is true that he charges you more than other boatmen will; but I think, when I explain, that you will not therefore desert him." He said something in Portuguese to the negro, whose countenance instantly changed, being lighted up with a smile which wonderfully altered the expression of his features, and with a whoop he ran out. "In fact, gentlemen, I had a motive in asking you to patronise Pedro; I have known him many years; he is an extraordinary fellow, with quite a character for energy and determination, uncommon in a negro. He was the property of a master, who, like many others here, allowed their slaves to work at any calling they chose, expecting each to bring home daily a certain sum—if they earn more it is their own property. By working hard and practising the greatest self-denial, Pedro managed, in the course of time, to purchase his freedom. Just as he had done so, he fell in love with and married a slave girl. He soon made enough to buy her also; before this was done, however, two children were born, which of course are the property of her master, and Pedro is determined to buy them as well. He has still a great deal to make up; but I help him all I can, by getting him constant employment amongst the English shipping, and I am sure I am not mistaken in believing that, as Britons, you would rather pay poor Pedro his shilling, to help him buy his wife and children, than the other boatmen sixpence, which will go into the pockets of their masters." Just then Pedro came in with his youngest child, a boy of twelve months, which he proudly offered for our inspection; and it was really a most touching and beautiful sight to see the huge rugged fellow, with his harsh features lighted up with love and tenderness and parental pride, so that we could scarcely recognise him for the same man, holding up the child and looking at us as much as to say, "You Englishmen not help me buy this little fellow?" Of course there was no resisting such an appeal, and Pedro had it all his own way while we lay in harbour.

This occurrence naturally led us to talk of slavery; and from the conversation between our ship's doctor and Mr. S—, who had resided thirty years in the country, we obtained some curious information, not only concerning it, but also as regards the state of religion in Brazil. As respects slavery, they described the fearfully degraded state of private morals, traceable in great part to this system, the evil influence of the black race on the white being all the greater, that there was not that social antagonism between them that existed in some other countries. The taint in social morality they described as being so deep-seated and wide-spread, that its effect in reacting upon and inducing intellectual and physical deterioration was palpably manifest to the foreign observer.

"Examine the soldiers on parade," said Mr. S—; "have you anywhere seen such stunted forms, such degraded, animalized faces? And as to the upper classes, you will see them presently."

We walked under the guidance of Mr. S—, after a time, in such a direction as would bring us in contact with the youths coming from the "Collegio," several groups of whom we met and conversed with, Mr. S—, to whom the families of most of them were known, introducing us ceremoniously to the young gentlemen. Our party consisted of the doctor, myself, and two of our fellow-passengers, Cornishmen of great bulk in stature. In fact, we were all rather tall men; and the contrast between us and the generality of the Brazilians we had hitherto met with, was striking enough; but now it was almost ludicrously so.

We found that several of the boys could speak English; and our interview seemed to be mutually interesting, the two big Cornishmen in particular appearing to excite in the young Bahians a kind of languid wonder. Boys, did I call them? I should rather have said little men, or mannikins; for there was not one, not even the youngest of the group—a mere child of six or seven years—but was dressed in the latest Parisian fashion of adults, with swallow-tailed coats, gorgeous vests, high-crowned hats, and tiny varnished Wellington-boots, over which their white beautifully-cut trousers were tightly strapped. "How old is he?" asked Mr. Dangar, one of our gigantic passengers, after we had conversed awhile, pointing down to one very little fellow—who, having a disproportionately large head, required a large hat to cover it, which, with the tiny body and legs beneath, gave him a most extraordinary look. "He is twelve," was the reply. "And you?" inquired the doctor of the spokesman. "I am twenty;" and we found that, of the group that surrounded us, only a few were under sixteen, and most of them considerably above that age; yet, with one or two exceptions, none were taller, and the great majority not so robust, as hundreds of boys in England are at twelve, or even ten.

As we walked on, "There," said Dr. F—, "is an illustration of the text, 'He shall visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation.' Did you observe the pallid young faces, the puny limbs, the listless air, the deficiency of that boisterous vitality, which should characterize healthy boyhood and youth just escaped from school? The rugged sports of English lads are unknown to them; a Brazilian boy never plays; how could he, in such a dress, strapped so tightly?"

"What!" said I; "do you mean to say that is the way they always dress? I thought perhaps to-day was some gala—an examination, perhaps."

"Oh no; that is the style of every one who can possibly afford it. As soon as they cease to be very young children, they ape the dress and manners of men. Well may they do so; for fearfully early are they initiated into the vices of manhood." And Mr. S— proceeded to give us the result of his thirty years' observation and experience of the result of this accursed system, in depraving the minds of the young of both sexes; in particular, in rendering almost impossible the existence of those feelings of purity and feminine delicacy which are the glory of women reared and protected by the blessed influences of the Christian homes of Protestant England.

As we were speaking on this topic, three or four padres, full-fed, sallow, greasy-looking fellows, passed us; indeed, we could not stir without meeting them.

"All this horrible vice and immorality, and so much religion!" said I. "Does not the Church, do not the priests, strive to remedy this fearful state of things? Surely they too are not tainted with this universal vice and sensuality?" Mr. S— burst out into a laugh, and even our grave doctor smiled at my question.

"Yes; it is too serious a matter to be treated lightly," he said; "no subject for jesting. Your question is a natural one for a Protestant and an Englishman—churches everywhere, priests swarming; and yet there was never a people more utterly without religion, and without God in the world, than this. But as to their priests, who should be their exemplars and instructors, I tell you that they are worse, more shamelessly immoral, than any other class of the community, without exception. And he proceeded to draw a picture, and to state facts, which I heard afterwards confirmed by others, of the most appalling nature. High and low alike were described as equally stained with the same abominable wickedness, sensuality, and gross darkness of soul. Indeed, the most awful fact imparted to us, involved the highest church dignitaries. "I do not mean to say there are no exceptions. God never leaves even the most benighted people without witnesses of himself; and doubtless there are some exemplary men, according to their light, amongst them. But the worst characteristic about this people is, that such instances of exceeding wickedness in their clergy, as I have just mentioned, instead of exciting horror, are treated as subjects for jests."

The second day after we anchored in Bahia was Sunday; and as our agent had informed us that service would be held by a Protestant clergyman on shore, a party of us arranged to go. Before starting, I happened to accompany Dr. F— on a visit he paid below to the ship's carpenter, who had met with an accident some days previously; and while we were in his berth, the two apprentices belonging to the ship came down in great glee, and began to prepare for going on shore, where they had obtained leave to spend the day. We could hear them discussing, in anticipation, the pleasure they intended to enjoy. One was a young man of two or three and twenty, who had been sent to sea on account of his wild and dissipated habits when on shore; the other was a lad of fourteen, upon his first voyage.

"I tell you what we'll do, George," said the former; "first of all we go to the Frenchman's and have a few games of billiards; perhaps we may win some money. I flatter myself I can play; I ought to, for I have handled the cue often enough; that was one reason why the governor packed me off to sea—said I was a regular gambler. Can you play, George?"

No; George could not.

"I'll teach you. After that, as we are sure to meet lots of fellows on shore on leave, we'll have a nigger race, with those arm-chair things they carry people in; then we'll knock about till it's time to go to the theatre—it's open only on Sunday nights. It's capital fun, I'm told. In fact, George, my lad, we'll go the pace; I'll show you how to do it."

"Yes, I expect you will," said the doctor, emerging from the carpenter's cabin; "you are just the one to show him how to pace headlong to destruction. Theatre and billiards! on a Sunday too! Remember at least that you are an Englishman, if you are not a Christian."

All on board had a great respect for Dr. F—, who was not only a high-minded gentleman, but a man of Christian principle; and for a moment the young man was rather taken aback; but he soon recovered his natural hardihood.

"Well, but what can a fellow do, doctor? Sunday is the only day we can get ashore; and one must do in Rome as Romans do, you know."

"What can you do!" retorted Dr. F—; "there's one thing you can do, and ought to do: come to church with us, and pray that you may have grace to leave off drinking and swearing—two vices which I have observed

to be fast growing upon you these last two voyages, Master Fred. However, you may go where you please, and do what you like; but you shall not take that boy with you, and make him as great a reprobate as yourself. You will come with Mr. — and me, George, will you not?" he asked of the younger lad.

The boy was unwilling enough to do so, and would plainly have preferred the company and amusements of his fellow apprentice; but the doctor eventually succeeded in persuading him, and Frederick J— went off by himself. After the service, which was held in a large room belonging to one of the English merchants of the place, the doctor, George, and I, took Pedro's boat, and landed at a considerable distance from the town, up the bay, with the intention of visiting the burial-place where a former friend and messmate, who had sickened on the African coast and died in Bahia, lay interred. I shall never forget that walk in the country, after so many months at sea. We could never sufficiently admire the beauty of the tropical trees—there was one tamarind tree that we stood gazing at for half an hour at least. The flowers, of such wondrous form and hue, which we saw in the gardens of the villas we passed (the handsomest of which, we found, were the property of the energetic English merchants)—the bright-plumaged birds, the singular plants—all were novel and strange; in fact, everything seemed so to us—even the so long unaccustomed sensation of being once more on terra firma, and walking with the boughs over our heads, and the grass beneath our feet, and the scent of vegetation in the breeze. To enjoy these to the utmost, we made a wide circuit, so as not to reach the cemetery for some hours. We spent an hour there, and found many English inscriptions, on stones chiefly raised to the memory of sailors who had died on the coast. But there was one of great interest to Dr. F—, not only as a naval man, but also as that of a former commander; for here lay, until the last trump shall sound, the mortal remains of Captain Lambert, of the British frigate "Java," who was mortally wounded in the action with the American ship "Constitution," and brought into Bahia to die.

After we had sufficiently rested, we rose to re-enter the city, which lay beneath us, and in a short time we came to an open space in the suburbs, where we saw a crowd, and heard a great uproar; and presently emerged, followed by a shouting rabble of the black and yellow scum of Bahia, half a dozen tipsy sailors, seated on chairs held up by poles, and carried by two negroes each. They were racing and chasing each other about, or rather their bearers were; and the scene was accompanied by the too customary volleys of oaths and execrations, which to the British sailor are unfortunately too often as characteristic as his tarpaulin, or his rolling gait. Prominent amongst them was Master Frederick J—, shouting, gesticulating, swearing—in fact, "going the pace" the doctor had mentioned in the morning, at a furious rate.

"Behold a sailor's idea of pleasure," he said. "It is a disgraceful fact that the seamen of the most religious nation in the world should when in foreign ports be more flagrantly and outrageously wicked and intemperate than those of nations whom we credit with having no religion at all. Are you sorry now, George," he added, turning to the lad who was with us, "that you are not with them?" George shook his head, and took care to avoid being seen by his fellow apprentice and his riotous companions. "You see them, and appreciate the folly and wickedness of their conduct, because you are cool and sober. Had you gone with them and got primed with grog, you might have been just as bad as they are. Do you

not think now you have spent the day in a more rational, Christian-like, and satisfactory manner, than if you had gone with Fred and joined him in his wickedness? I am only afraid those fellows will get into some serious scrape, from what the agent told me. Some weeks ago, it seems, there was a great disturbance here, in which our countrymen were involved. The officers from an English ship carrying troops to India, either forgot or refused to take off their hats when some procession was passing, and they were knocked off; this led to blows, drawn knives and swords, and some bloodshed. The affair was patched up by the English consul; but the rankle remains; and only a few days before we anchored, a sailor was found dead by the dockyard gate, with a knife sticking in his ribs. Mr. S— told me most emphatically not to walk through the city after dark, not to turn a corner sharply, and to sedulously avoid giving all cause of offence. They are a treacherous, truculent set of desperadoes, who stab you from behind; and I should not wonder if some of those men suffer." The prediction proved only too true.

As we turned into the main streets of the city, we found them filled with priests and penitents, and processions of flags, images, and all the paraphernalia of Romish superstition and mummery. We were most jealously watched, and it was plain that the slightest hesitation on our part in removing our hats, would have been followed by unpleasant consequences. In order, therefore, to avoid these as much as possible, we turned out of the upper part of the city, and endeavoured to find our way to the agent's house, where we had promised to take tea, by the most quiet streets we could find; and, as we had still an hour to spare, we passed it in entering and examining such churches as were empty. There was no occasion to look for them; you came to one every few yards. Miserable affairs most of them were—with the usual tawdry paintings of martyrs and saints, with tin glories stuck round their heads, and images compared to which an English wax doll was a work of high art. But in one we witnessed a striking scene.

We were going down one of those very narrow and exceedingly steep streets leading to the water side, from the upper part of the city, when all at once our steps were arrested by an extraordinary noise issuing from a building we were passing, and which we did not observe at first was a church.

"What can that be?" said Dr. F—. "It's a lot of women screaming," said George. We listened. "I really believe," said I, "it is meant for singing;" and I approached and pushed open the door, which I found led into a tolerably sized church of the usual character, viz., a large bare open space paved with a coarse kind of marble. After one glance, I beckoned to the others, to come and look on the sight inside—one not to be witnessed anywhere, except in a South American Roman Catholic country. Kneeling in the centre of the building, and facing the altar at the other end, were some two or three hundred female figures, draped entirely in white mantles, which, covering the head, and secured under the chin, enveloped the whole body, and swept the pavement. Besides them there was no one else in the church. That they were women, the shrill discordant voices with which they chanted, or rather screamed, informed us, for we could not see a single feature; until at length, the solitary priest officiating at the altar, observing our entrance, and that we were foreigners and heretics, waved his arm for us to depart out of the sacred building. The effect which followed this gesture was one of the most startling I have ever witnessed;

for, upon observing it, the whole of the kneeling figures, instantly ceasing their chanting, with one simultaneous motion quickly turned their heads round towards the door, to see what was the matter, and each face revealed proved to be that of an old negress. This sudden apparition of hundreds of black and shrivelled faces, upon what had been the instant before a snow-white mass of drapery, was absolutely startling, and I may say horrible; for, upon observing us, they grinned and frowned at us in such a manner, that I, for one, I know, was seized with a feeling very much akin to superstitious fear, and did not require a second order to depart, and leave them undisturbed to practise what the poor benighted creatures had been doubtless taught to consider as devotions acceptable to God. I intended to make some inquiries respecting them; but subsequent events put it from my memory. I presume they were the sisterhood of some religious community instituted amongst the aged females of the black population of Bahia.

It was some time after dark when we left the house of Mr. S—— to go to the boat, and we found sentinels stationed every few yards, and strong patrols marching through the principal streets; for there had been rumours of late of an intended rising amongst the slaves, of whom there were nearly four to each white man in this city of 200,000 inhabitants. As we neared the embarking place—which, after dark, was within the dockyard—we heard the noise of a great tumult suddenly arise, through the din of which we plainly distinguished English oaths and shouts; and presently the party of Sunday pleasure-seekers, numbering nearly a dozen from the different English ships in harbour, came down escorted by a body of soldiers, who had just rescued them from the vengeance of a mob, which had suddenly fallen upon and attacked them with their knives. Some were badly cut and bleeding; but all were able to walk except one, who was supported by two of his comrades, and who sank down exhausted with loss of blood as he entered the dockyard gate. The doctor pressed forward through the crowd, and a lamp being brought by a soldier from the guard-room, he stooped down to examine the wounded man. As the light fell upon the pallid features, I recognised Frederick J——. At first we thought he was mortally wounded, the knife having penetrated deep into the chest. The affair sprang from a quarrel in the billiard-room, in which J—— had knocked one of the townspeople down, after accusing him of cheating at the game. An uproar was the consequence, and the sailors, uniting together, drove their antagonists from the hotel. Determined on revenge, they had waylaid the seamen on their return from the theatre, and attacked them with their knives; and, had they not been speedily rescued by the patrol, several lives would doubtless have been sacrificed.

J—— was taken on board, and for some time his life was despaired of; but God in his mercy spared it, and when we reached England he went on shore with every prospect of recovery. But the warning was thrown away upon him: he had "hardened himself in his iniquity;" and I afterwards heard that he had died of an inflammatory fever, brought on by dissipation recklessly indulged in, before he had properly recovered his strength. Such was the eventual result of his Sunday pleasure-trip in Bahia.

GREEK FIRE.

The bombardment of Charleston with shells, containing a material that the Federals have called "Greek Fire," has

very naturally been the means of drawing attention to the celebrated Oriental composition, which, under that name, has acquired fame in history. After the lapse of many ages, it cannot be reasonably expected that any very precise record of the terrible ancient, or rather mediæval compound, will be forthcoming; nevertheless, the historical records which have been handed down concerning it may possess a legitimate interest just now. As a preliminary to our notice of this terrible war agent, it may be hardly necessary for us to premise that a knowledge of this, or any other material or agent of human destruction, is far from implying that we experience any satisfaction in contemplating its employment. Nevertheless, relative to war, our opinion is, and has ever been, that reprobation of war in the abstract commends itself far more powerfully to reason than reprobation of any special agent or agency employed in warlike operations. In common with all Christian people, we must needs regret that the stern arbitrament of destruction is ever appealed to by reasoning beings, formed in God's own image, and into whose nostrils the Deity has breathed the breath of life; but, if war there be, then, considering that the very end and aim of war is destruction, it seems a little inconsequential to launch invectives against any special war material or war agency.

Historically regarded, Greek fire may be contemplated as filling a sort of middle epoch—the space of time intervening between the ancient and the modern system of conducting warfare. By the ancient system we mean that characterized by the use of projectiles, not hurled by the elastic force of expanding gases, the result of combustion; in other words, by the force of gunpowder, and the adoption of this latter agent. Such indication is not correct to the absolute, inasmuch as we shall discover presently that the use of Greek fire and that of gunpowder overlap mutually, so to speak; that is to say, the former had not quite gone out by the time the latter had come in. Shortly after the establishment of the eastern empire, notices of the use of Greek fire occur in historical records, and various statements in regard to its employment can be found at least up to the 14th century; wherefore, the general statement may be made, that the compound in question was essentially a war agent of the mediæval ages. Notwithstanding an opinion of Dutens to the contrary, there seems no good cause for believing that the material of Greek fire was known to the ancient Greeks. Impartial study of historical records bearing upon the question leads to the alternative conclusion that either the Byzantines invented Greek fire, or, what seems more probable, learned the secret of its preparation from the Asiatics, with whom they had intimate relations. Gibbon adopts the former hypothesis, and Beckmann coincides. According to him, the precise year of its discovery was A.D. 678, during the reign of the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus. If we may trust the same authority, the discovery was made by Callinicus, an architect of Heliopolis, the city afterwards called Balbeck; and he also states that Greek fire continued to be used without interruption until the end of the 13th century. Procopius, in his history of the Goths, calls it "Medea's oil," and attributes the invention of it to that sorceress. According to the author of "*L'Esprit des Croissades*," Greek fire had been employed as a war agent by the natives of India and China from time immemorial. Entering into particulars respecting the use of Greek fire during the crusades, the same author states that it was thrown from a machine called a "petrary," and when flying through the air it appeared like a sword of fire, or rather a dragon—making a great noise, and projecting a vast body of flame. He farther

relates that the terror which it caused in the army of Saint Louis was such that Gauthier de Cariel, a brave and experienced knight, advised his companions-in-arms to fall down in prayer for deliverance so often as the Greek fire was thrown, seeing that human precaution, in such a case, nothing availed. The counsel, according to our author, was followed; and, moreover, the king being a-bed in his tent, raised himself up whenever the Greek fire was thrown, and, lifting his hands to heaven, implored deliverance. According to Geoffroy de Vinsauf, who accompanied Richard Cœur de Lion to Palestine, Greek fire evolved a horrible stench, and darted forth lurid flames, inextinguishable by water, and consuming stone and iron alike: this latter account, doubtless, is an exaggeration. The assumption that Greek fire was employed by Byzantines and Asiatics alone, would be altogether wide of the mark. Crusaders having experienced the terrors of Greek fire, and learned how to make it, they and their successors used the material on many occasions of European warfare. Thus, for example, when in 1383 the Bishop of Norwich laid siege to Yprés, the garrison of that city is stated to have defended themselves so well, particularly with Greek fire, and certain engines called *cannons*, that the English were forced to raise the siege with such precipitation that all their large engines of war were left behind.

To complete the mediæval history of this subject, we give the well-known passage in Gibbon:—

"In the two sieges, the deliverance of Constantinople may be chiefly ascribed to the novelty, the terrors, and the real efficacy of the *Greek fire*. The important secret of compounding and directing this artificial flame was imparted by Callinicus, a native of Heliopolis in Syria, who deserted from the service of the caliph to that of the emperor. The skill of a chemist and engineer was equivalent to the succour of fleets and armies; and this discovery or improvement of the military art was fortunately reserved for the distressful period, when the degenerate Romans of the East were incapable of contending with the warlike enthusiasm and youthful vigour of the Saracens. The historian who presumes to analyze this extraordinary composition should suspect his own ignorance and that of his Byzantine guides, so prone to the marvellous, so careless, and, in this instance, so jealous of the truth. From their obscure, and perhaps fallacious hints, it should seem that the principal ingredient of the Greek fire was the *naphtha*, or liquid bitumen, a light, tenacious, and inflammable oil, which springs from the earth, and catches fire as soon as it comes in contact with the air. The *naphtha* was mingled, I know not by what methods or in what proportions, with sulphur, and with the pitch that is extracted from evergreen firs. From this mixture, which produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a fierce and obstinate flame, which not only rose in perpendicular ascent, but likewise burnt with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress; instead of being extinguished, it was nourished and quickened by the element of water; and sand, urine, or vinegar, were the only remedies that could damp the fury of this powerful agent, which was justly denominated by the Greeks the *liquid*, or the *maritime* fire. For the annoyance of the enemy, it was employed with equal effect, by sea and land, in battles or in sieges. It was either poured from the rampart in large boilers, or launched in red-hot balls of stone and iron, or darted in arrows and javelins, twisted round with flax and tow, which had deeply im-

bibed the inflammable oil: sometimes it was deposited in fire-ships, the victims and instruments of a more ample revenge, and was most commonly blown through long tubes of copper, which were planted on the prow of a galley, and fancifully shaped into the mouths of savage monsters, that seemed to vomit a stream of liquid and consuming fire. This important art was preserved at Constantinople, as the palladium of the state; the galleys and artillery might occasionally be lent to the allies of Rome; but the composition of the Greek fire was concealed with the most jealous scruple, and the terror of the enemies was increased and prolonged by their ignorance and surprise. * * * By these precautions the secret was confined, above four hundred years, to the Romans of the East; and, at the end of the 11th century, the Pisans, to whom every sea and every art were familiar, suffered the effects, without understanding the composition, of the Greek fire. It was at length either discovered or stolen by the Mohammedans; and, in the holy wars of Syria and Egypt, they retorted an invention, contrived against themselves, on the heads of the Christians. A knight, who despised the swords and lances of the Saracens, relates, with heartfelt sincerity, his own fears, and those of his companions, at the sight and sound of the mischievous engine that discharged a torrent of the Greek fire, the *feu Gregeois*, as it is styled by the more early of the French writers. 'It came flying through the air,' says Joinville, 'like a winged long-tailed dragon, about the thickness of a hog'shead, with the report of thunder and the velocity of lightning; and the darkness of the night was dispelled by this deadly illumination.' The use of the Greek, or, as it might now be called, of the Saracen fire, was continued to the middle of the 14th century, when the scientific or casual compound of nitre, sulphur, and charcoal effected a new revolution in the art of war and the history of mankind."

The very usual opinion has prevailed that the effects of Greek fire were so far more terrible than the effects of any modern agents of destruction, that military engineers of our own period would be desirous of learning its exact composition for employment now. This is a mistake. Modern chemistry has revealed the secret of materials and compounds of far greater destructive energy than that of the celebrated mediæval fire, even if we base our opinions regarding it on the very highly-wrought testimony of contemporary historians. With respect to the actual composition of the material of Greek fire, the only precise testimony, so far as we are aware, is that of the Princess Anna Comnena. According to that authority, the components of the material of Greek fire were resin, sulphur, and oil. A compound of that sort would have been very inflammable, but still not so inflammable as some compounds that could be made, or even as what we now call "rock oil."

Whatever the discrepancy of opinion in regard to the exact composition of original Greek fire, there can be none whatever as to the mechanical or physical state of it. The material of Greek fire was unquestionably a fluid; and, according to descriptions that have come down to the present time, it must have been employed in one of two methods: either it must have been thrown shut up in fragile jars, or other vessels, which broke on impact and dispersed the liquid, or projected from tubes. The chief use of such a compound would be to cause the destruction of shipping, and what we should now denominate "dockyard stores." Against stone fortifications it could have availed but little.

It is very far from our intention to particularize any of the numerous chemical compounds and mechanical

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chap. LII. The original works and authorities are given by Gibbon in foot-notes.

mixtures with which scientific men are conversant, that could, were it desirable, be substituted for the original material of Greek fire; nevertheless we may, without harm or impropriety, notice the characteristics of a few. Firstly, there is a compound known to chemists that not only burns spontaneously on coming into contact with the atmosphere, but which, during its combustion, evolves arsenical fumes. There are several which ignite spontaneously, and during combustion evolve poisonous fumes, still more deadly than those of arsenic. It fills the mind with sad thoughts to reflect that sin has sunk humanity so low, that the question, whether the use of any of these horrors should be deemed permissible, is gravely entertained; thus, nevertheless, it is. A consolation admits, however, of being drawn, from reflecting on the proposition, and it is this—hitherto every accession to war's destructive agencies has diminished the slaughter of warfare. That such result should be, seems very strange; but the fact, nevertheless, is indisputable. Consulting precedent, then, and reasoning analogically, there would seem fair grounds for believing that warfare may some day be made impossible as between civilised belligerents—how strangely misapplied does the expression seem!—because of the mutual fear of wholesale destruction.

A YEAR-MARKET IN SWITZERLAND.

EARLY one morning in May, when staying at Thun, I was awakened by an unusual stir outside the "Hotel Frienhof." Rushing to the window, I saw on the river (the Aar) a number of the broad-bottomed boats peculiar to Swiss lakes, hastening to unload their freight at the various landing-places, while on the opposite side were crowds of foot-people, pouring into the town from all the country round. Upon inquiring of the "kellner" (waiter) the cause of this unusual disturbance, he told us that it was the day for the year-market of the town, when the people of the hills and villages assembled to sell the carvings in wood, and whatever else had occupied their time through the long winter; and also to buy farm implements and other necessities for the active business of the summer months.

After breakfast I started, note-book in hand, to see what was to be seen. First of all, immediately in front of the door of our hotel, just at the corner of one of the bridges over the Aar, was a sturdy fellow in a short blue smock and a battered wide-awake, who was possessed of the most brazen throat and leathery lungs that ever belonged to talkative mortal. His efforts at oratory began regularly with "Meinen herren (gentlemen)," and ended with "com-po-si-ti-on," and were interspersed with jokes and allusions to passing events, which raised smiles and blushes on the cheek of many a rustic belle. His mode of performing was one not unknown at our English fairs. He borrowed a knife of a bystander, which he then, apparently at least, blunted without mercy on wood or stone, or anything near at hand; then, rubbing the blade with his composition, he cut a hair in two to prove the newly-produced sharpness; after which convincing proof of the virtue he ascribed to his composition, he offered cakes of it for sale at the unprecedented sum of one sou a-piece. Passing over the bridge, we came into the main street. Those who have seen the street will remember its quaint construction—the carriage-way sunk a whole story below the foot-way, so that the passengers on the latter walk really on the top of sundry dingy rooms, the doors of which open on the carriage-way. On the foot-way, on the day

I am describing, were erected sundry slight booths in addition to the regular shops, filled with every variety of articles for show or use. Hats of various shape, mostly low-crowned; boots, some of gorgeous red leather; handkerchiefs of gaudy colours; braces, worked with flowery pattern; ribbons waving in the wind, the more ready to catch a maiden's eye; pipes, mostly of china; all with paintings, grotesque or historical—these all were offered for the notice of the rustics. Besides all these, there were wooden spoons, sponges, crockery of all colours, shapes, and patterns; ironmongery, scythe-handles, more carved and painted than with us; cloth bought in short pieces, just sufficient for a coat to be worn only on high days and holidays. All through the street, a dense crowd of men, women, and children poured, squeezed, and jammed itself. Here came a maiden with a gaudy smoking-cap, a present, doubtless, for some favoured lover; there a group of learned patriarchs were discussing to a nicety the exact tone and pitch of a set of cowbells, the largest of which was eight or nine inches in diameter at the mouth; here a cobbler had pitched his seat, and was hammering in nails and fixing tips and heels to newly-bought boots; there went a boy with a basket of what looked as if they ought to be nuts, but which turned out to be small onions—bought and eaten, however, by handfuls.

The only breathing-place seemed to be near the fountain, where the street opens out into a sort of square, though here the ease was only comparative, and was lessened by the going in and out of children to a large school on one side. Farther on appeared a few cows, not very large or very fine, and one or two horses which would not have fetched much anywhere. Sundry piles of cheese seemed to have stood successive attacks and dislodgements, and to be yet able to present a fair front to all comers. We strolled on to the station, where, even at noon, trains of third-class carriages were beginning to take off those who had completed their business early. Here we could notice the costume better: the women all wore the black bodice, opening from shoulder to shoulder across the breast, and showing a range of spotless linen, a petticoat, black or a dark check, and hats of ample dimensions. The men were mostly clad in the dirty brown home-spun cloth of the country, scanty, very scanty in the coat-tails, while the shirt collars were very sharp under the ears, and then rose threateningly towards the eyes. Late in the afternoon we returned to our hotel, and still found the indefatigable patterer vaunting his wondrous composition; but long ere the regimental band performed its evening circuit of the town the crowds of the morning had melted away, though, here and there, voices joining in chorus told of some lingering revelry.

"THE READING OF THE WILL."

THE accompanying picture is from the celebrated painting by Sir David Wilkie, the first of his works which distinctly extended his fame over the continent of Europe, where he was previously, but partially known, by a few slighter pieces and engravings of less elaborate design. It presents some of the characteristic features which command universal popularity; appreciated alike by cultivated and common tastes.

The subject of "Reading the Will" was originally suggested to the artist by John (better known as Jack) Bannister, the comedian. He had a choice collection of cabinet pictures, and was a good judge of

their qualities; and the correctness of his taste may be admitted from the circumstance that he intensely admired in Wilkie his entire freedom from everything theatrical. A further hint, it is said, was obtained from the funeral of Lady Singleside, in "Guy Mannering;" but if so, it was altogether departed from in the composition of the sketch. Upon this sketch he was engaged in February 1819, when the Marquis of Stafford saw it, and was so pleased that he immediately chose it, as a characteristic piece, to fulfil a commission for the king of Bavaria, who had intimated his wish, through Lord Burghersh, to possess a painting by the popular Scottish painter. The price was left to the painter's discretion; three hundred louis d'or was agreed upon, and Wilkie was accordingly requested to go on with it in oil. Here we have, in the cradle as it were, to initiate an infant picture, a noted actor, a famous author, a lofty peer, another an ambassador, and a king. But we shall by and by come to yet more stirring negotiations; for, in truth, the doing a work of this kind seems as little short of a grand state affair as might be the invasion of a country, the arrangement of preliminaries, and the conclusion of a treaty of peace.

Wilkie was at this time engaged in preparing and completing his design for the "Chelsea Pensioners reading the 'Gazette' of the Battle of Waterloo;" but, as he proceeded with the "Will" in the first instance, nothing need be said of the greater labour than that it involved tenfold trouble—numerous meetings and deliberations with the hero of that glorious day, and connoisseurs of rank and refined taste, whose opinions were sought in aid; and that very many alterations were made, through years, as the fertile subject made progress to its admirable ultimate completeness.

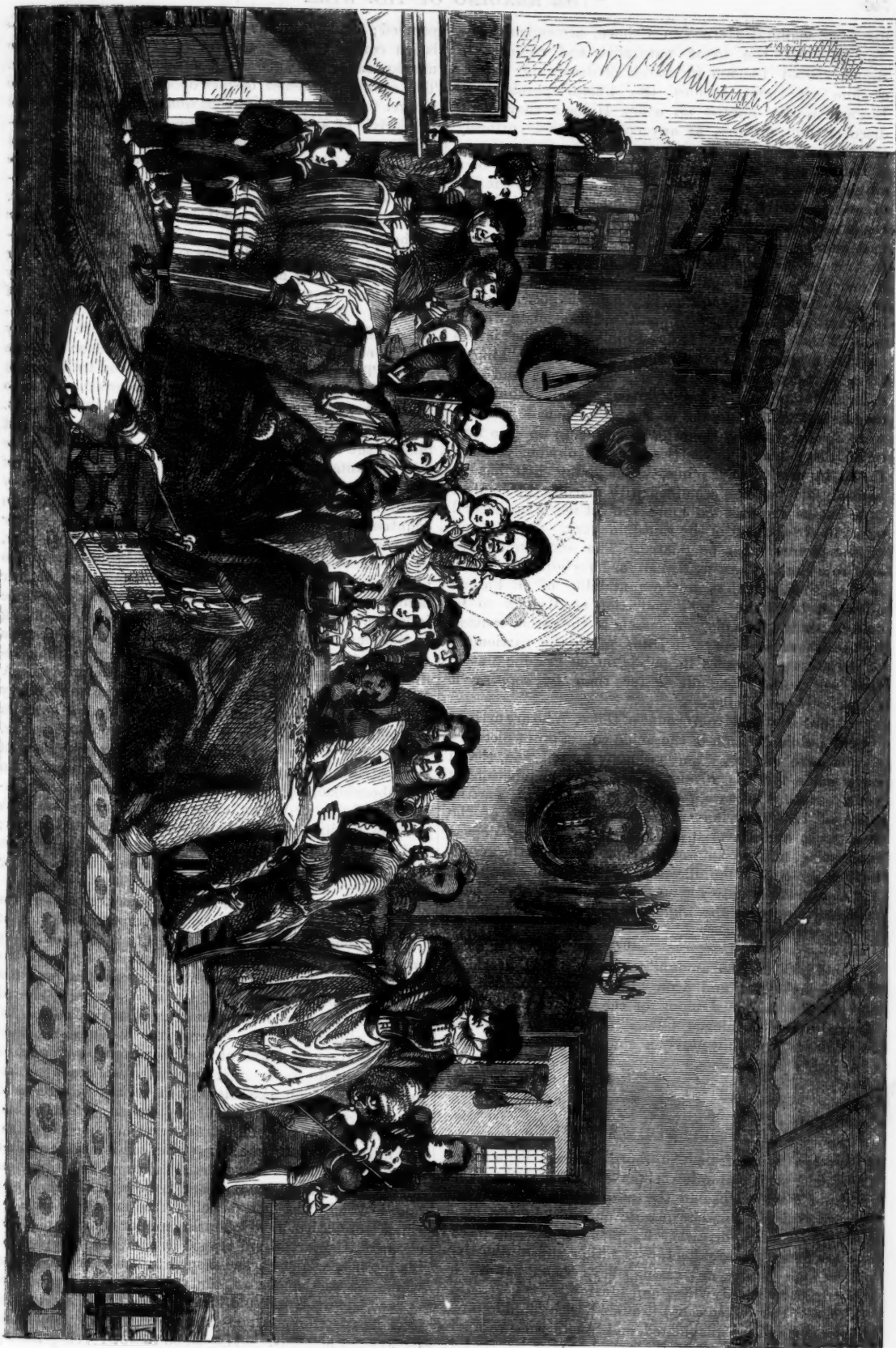
"The Reading of the Will" was doomed to no similar criticisms, suggestions, and procrastination. Next year, 1820, it was finished, and exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition, where its merits challenged the foremost centre place; and it at once became the chief boast and pre-eminent attraction of the principal room. The multitudinous voice of fame was loud and unanimous in its praise; and, indeed, it may be said to have restored the artist to his height of fame, which had hardly been maintained at its full pitch by his latest contributions, though these were sufficient for more than moderate aspiring, and only paled a little in comparison with those earlier works which, in four or five years, had raised him to the pinnacle of gratified ambition. But now up sprung a consequence which for a short while unhinged the business, and did create a slight degree of confusion. His Majesty George IV, who had already secured the "Penny Wedding" for five hundred guineas, expressed his desire to add this second Wilkie to his choice collection; and the question arose whether his own sovereign could with propriety have the original, and a duplicate be sent to the king of Bavaria, or whether that monarch should receive the actual picture for which his commission had been given, and his Britannic Majesty be contented with a copy. Hereupon considerable discussion arose. Sir Thomas Laurence, President of the Royal Academy, communicated the royal wish to the painter, who answered that he must consult the Marquis of Stafford, from whom he had received the order; and the marquis referred him to Baron Pfeffel, the Bavarian minister; and the baron put the case most diplomatically, that "either the picture was (writes Wilkie) mine, or that it belonged to the king of Bavaria. If mine, I may dispose of it as I please; but, if it was the king of Bavaria's, then the matter could only be arranged by an application from the king of Britain to the king of Bavaria. I told him

(adds the canny Scot) that if the picture was approved by the king of Bavaria, and the money paid I had engaged to paint it for, that it was certainly the king of Bavaria's picture." And then this was stated to Sir Thomas Laurence, with a recommendation from the Baron to apply through Brooke Taylor, the English resident at his royal master's court; and, as Wilkie properly avowed that he would be more satisfied to send the first picture to its intended destination, the high contracting parties were speedily brought to accord, and there was no war between Great Britain and Bavaria.

Within a month Baron Pfeffel called with a message to send the cause of all this ferment immediately to Munich, and the Bavarian banker was ordered to pay for the same the sum of £425; that was £100 in addition to the stipulated price, and £25 for the frame. And yet another month elapsed before the affair was settled. The envoy, Brooke Taylor, wrote that it was a very *delicate subject* (not the picture, but the treaty about it); but Sir Benjamin Bloomfield having gracefully withdrawn the king's proposition, Wilkie packed up the treasure, and made it over to his Excellency Pfeffel, on receipt of £447 10s. in full of all demands. A great many letters passed on this occasion, and there were interviews enough to satisfy a national congress. The terms throughout are amusing, from their official character, definitions of words, and explanations of motives and meanings; and it appears from his oscillations that poor fortunate and flattered Wilkie was for awhile in a dilemma which sorely perplexed him. But all's well that ends well. "The Reading of the Will" arrived safely at the Bavarian capital, and it was officially notified to the artist that it was received in a manner which indicated his Majesty's entire satisfaction with his acquisition. At first he was so delighted that he had it hung in his bedroom, whence it was only removed, agreeably to the "plaisir inexprimable" it continued to afford him, into the best light in the royal gallery, and a first-rate picture was shifted away in order to vacate this superior position for the favourite. Encouraged by such distinctions, our countryman was prompted to beg the king's leave to have the picture engraved in the line manner; to be dedicated to his Majesty, and secured for a period as his own exclusive privilege, so that, as he stated, he might take care it should be executed in a style worthy of his patron. This permission was frankly conceded, and in 1824 he prevailed on his friend, John Burnet—great as an engraver, a painter (witness his "Trafalgar," companion to Wilkie's "Waterloo"), and a writer on art—to proceed to Munich to make a drawing for the purpose of his *burin*; and it may be noticed apropos that Wilkie, who (besides the "Blind Fiddler" and others) had paid him three hundred pounds or guineas for engraving "The Rabbit on the Wall," had every reason to be satisfied by those translations, and that the profits on such publications form no small share of the painter's emoluments. As, for example, at a certain date after their respective issue, Mr. Wilkie's third share of the "Village Politicians" amounted to £410 11s., and Mr. Raimbach's two shares to £820 1s. 10d.; whilst in the "Rent Day" their relative proportions were £358 14s. 5d. and £717 8s. 10d.

Burnet was graciously entertained in Bavaria—as, indeed, was every British artist who visited that country in the time of its munificent monarch, whose own literary and artistic endowments were of no common amateur class, and whose admiration of our school in general was warmly displayed on many occasions. Soon after the period of which we are speaking, the keeper of

THE READING OF THE WILL.



his royal gallery, Herr Von Schorn, accompanied by Von Martuis, the great naturalist and explorer of Brazil, visited London in search of deserving objects of fine art; and, besides the liberal purchase of English works, hunted up every Holbein they could discover and procure, at any cost, for their princely employer.

Before, however, concluding our desultory story of a single performance, we may, as a sample of what the life of an eminently popular artist must be, remind our readers of the prominent features of this triumph, in the best manner, of Sir David Wilkie. The stolid, passionless man of law, reading the will as an every-day concern, is deliciously poised against the gay, burly officer, whose part in the affair, though more silent, is notwithstanding more impressive: for upon the disconsolate widow, who is left sole heir and administratrix, he is bestowing a glance as *inappreciable* as that of the king of Bavaria upon its pictorial representation; and her evident submission to her grievous loss is exquisitely contrasted with the rage of the other female relative, who, disappointed by the will, is flouncing up in a fury or in disgust at the heartlessness so obviously manifested by the bereaved one. The young heir has as yet only his pockets crammed with marbles to comfort him, but he requires no more; and it needs no second sight to see the end of the well-told story. But the end of the picture must be related. The first sketch was sold to a Nottingham gentleman for forty guineas. And in due time, when, with the mutability of all human affairs, it befell the king's collection at Munich to be sold under the hammer, an epistle to the artist, written by the Chevalier George de Dillis, gives the particulars of its latest appearance in public, in so graphic a style that we cannot conclude better than by copying it *verbatim et literatim* :—

"Dear Sir,—To give Account of those, Who are arrived by our public Auction of the noble collection of pictures, as you have desired, i am so happy to tell you, that i have made for the royale Gallerie the acquisition of your beautiful picture, the *reading of a Will*, for the price of 12,000 florins—with a great applause of the Spectators and Bavarian nation, in the highest degree interesting, and so interesting not only for the Artist but for the Royale munificence and the Whole Nation.

"Congratulating to you on the honour which you have received i am, with the highest opinion of your merits, your most devoted servant,

"GEORGE DE DILLIS."

The 12,000 florins amount to about £1200, or thrice the original cost; and even whilst we write this, we observe the sale in London of the picture of "Queen Mary leaving Lochleven Castle" (painted in 1827) for 760 guineas, marking nearly a similar rise in the value of Wilkie's productions.

JACKY BARBOUR'S STORY.

ABOUT ten miles from Edinburgh is a village called Cockenzie, which stands on the southern shore of the Frith of Forth, close to the sea. It is a quaint and primitive place, of indeterminate antiquity, made up of straggling streets, or rather fragments of streets, placed at all angles. Its architecture is rather substantial than picturesque, except on washing-days when set off by their drapery of red, white, and blue.

Some of the cottages are provided with outside stone stairs more or less dilapidated, and others with vaults in the sloping beach. Each interior, however, is densely

peopled; for, though the whole village is small, its population consists of nine hundred persons. Most of the men are sailors engaged in the adjacent herring-fisheries. The sanitary schemes of metropolitan legislators have not yet found their way to that quarter; and, as was said by Carlyle of a Welsh village, the ash-pits and rubbish-heaps mostly remove themselves by their own natural chemistry. The people, nevertheless, as becomes those who live close to the sea, are subject to the healthy influences of that great renovator, and are simple, sober, and industrious in their habits, pursuing the even tenor of their way in contentment. Like most fishing populations, they are gregarious in their dispositions, living almost exclusively among themselves, and being closely intertwined by the ties of relationship and similarity of pursuits. Each, it is true, is fully cognisant of his neighbour's affairs; for pedigrees abound, and are liberally quoted, either for honour or for dishonour, when disputes arise. The village is their little world, and its concerns form the staple of their sayings and doings; but, as to the great world outside, they seldom give it a thought. The boys of the place early learn to dive and swim, and take to the water as naturally as ducks. Some of these take advantage of their proximity to the highway of nations, and go out to the great sea in ships, thereby gratifying the yearnings of their nature by visiting foreign countries. They afterwards return wiser and sadder men, to join the gray fathers of the commonwealth, or, as sometimes happens, are never more heard of, and die a lingering and uncertain death in the memories of their families and associates. Occasional incidents like these influence the youth, and give variety to old age, according to the tenor of the adventures narrated; for they are a sympathetic and impulsive people, tinged with that credulity which is born of the wonders of the great deep. When anything remarkable occurs in the fortunes of any member of their community, the topic at once becomes common property. If it is marvellous and interesting, the whole village marvels and is interested. One of these striking events has lately occurred, to convulse the neighbourhood, regarding the adventures or rather vicissitudes of a sailor-boy called Jacky Barbour. The facts are now familiar to the inhabitants as household words; and as they transpired not many months since, and are entirely authentic, they will, no doubt, interest our readers.

It was on a day in last autumn that a stranger was seen approaching the village of Cockenzie; and in that little curious community strangers are scanned very narrowly. He seemed to be about middle age, and was dressed somewhat in Yankee fashion. His hat was of a French shape, his coat long, his whiskers were shaved away, and his face was bronzed as if with the suns of foreign climes. As he entered the village he looked wonderingly around, scanning each house with an amazed and questioning look. His inquisitive air made an impression even on the clergyman of the village, who turned round for a moment to wonder what errand brought him there. The stranger, after some hesitation and misgiving, entered a shop and asked if a person of the name of Alexander Barbour lived there. The shopkeeper answered in the affirmative, and pointed to the door of a house which was not far off. The stranger, with no small trepidation, and labouring under ill-concealed excitement, then went and tapped at the door. Instead of his mother, whom he had hoped to see there, a woman whom he did not know, and who did not know him, opened the door, and told him in answer to his question, that it was the house of Alexander Barbour, but that he was not at home, having gone to the-herring fishing

for a few days. The stranger was at once perplexed, and hesitated what to do or what further to say; but at last, surmising from her appearance who she was, he asked if she was Alexander Barbour's wife. She said "yes," apparently equally confused by the abrupt manner of the inquiry and the appearance of the stranger; and her surprise was further heightened by his half-suppressed ejaculation which followed: "Then, my mother is dead!" At the same time, scarcely conscious what he was doing, he entered the house, and continued visibly affected at the sight of the old place, inasmuch as many things there, which had lingered in his memory half forgotten, now suddenly restored his recollection. Some natural drops also fell from his eyes: his heart died within him, and, being at a loss for words, he sat down. The woman then, all at once recollecting the story that had often been alluded to in the family, of the long-lost son, who had been given up for dead years before, broke her wondering silence with the question, "Are you Jacky Barbour?" "Yes, I am," said the stranger. This answer was like an electric shock to the stepmother, who in the twinkling of an eye, without a single word more, sprang out of her house to an adjoining cottage, and, in a frenzy of excitement, told his sister that Jacky had come home. The sister, who was married to a sailor, and in whom a lingering thought had survived that Jacky might one day turn up, instantly took in the news without a single doubt or misgiving, and, inoculated with the contagion, ran to her father's house and flung herself into the stranger's arms. So much had the appearance of both changed since their early days, that they could hardly have known each other. If she had any hesitation, she was at once reassured that it could be no other than her brother, by the questions he asked as to the other members of the family. While the brother and sister were thus pouring out their hearts and exchanging the news about the family, the stepmother, who felt as it were one degree removed from the matter, and being loath to embarrass their free conversation, took advantage of the opportunity to sally forth to the neighbours. Nothing exceeds the natural pleasure of communicating exciting news; and accordingly, she lost not a moment in gratifying this instinct.

"What do ye think? Jacky Barbour's come hame!" was the watchword with which she flew from door to door. All the women turned out of their houses, as the wonder grew; and, with babies in their arms, and troops of children of higher degree at their heels, they flocked towards the house of Alexander Barbour, to verify the report. Those who were children in his time had grown into men and women, and a new generation was advancing; but all, nevertheless, considered themselves more or less personally interested, and bound to assist in a public and impromptu demonstration of their satisfaction.

The house of Barbour was besieged, and entered as common property, without question or remonstrance. Some shook him by the hand; others more impulsive, or more nearly related, hung round his neck, each and all asking hurried and discordant questions as to how all of it had happened, and exchanging rapid family narratives, and introducing parties since born to the notice of the guest, as accredited witnesses of the proceedings.

In those primitive places, when any extraordinary event occurs, it is one of the first impulses of the parties interested to inform "the minister," whose sympathies are always at command, and who is at once the referee, guide, friend, and universal spokesman, on family occasions. The clergyman accordingly was at once sent for to share in the tidings, and probably to "say a word," since "Jacky Barbour had come hame." He came at once,

and was astounded to behold the sudden paroxysm of excitement, as the crowd made way for him to enter the door, with suppressed murmurs of satisfaction. On entering the house, Jacky Barbour was pointed out to him, in whom he at once recognised the stranger he had seen entering the village some minutes before. Jacky, whose face now shone with excitement, was holding his reception, surrounded with groups of all ages and degrees—the chief inhabitants of the village having by this time converged into a focus; and the enthusiasm and excitement were at tropical heat. Some were sobbing and weeping; discordant voices were ejaculating all kinds of questions at one and the same moment—some alluding to the great news it would be to his honest father, and others interposing observations confirmatory of their own secret foresight and predictions that Jacky was alive, and would some day or other turn up. The clergyman had at first a difficulty in extracting the chief details of the story; but, after seeing and believing that a truly unique event had occurred, he established silence, and all with one accord were hushed when he proposed to offer up a prayer. This he did with genuine pathos, inspired by the singular circumstances; and returned thanks to the Almighty, whose providence had so wonderfully delivered the wanderer, the outcast, and the tempest-tost, and restored him to the friends who had long mourned for him as for one who was lost for ever.

The prayer of the clergyman having fully given voice and expression to the honest emotions of all who were present, the tempest was followed by a lull; and then it was time to think of the absent members of the family who were as yet unacquainted with the news. The father of Jacky Barbour was absent at the herring-fishery off Dunbar, about twenty miles distant, and a brother was also near the same spot. All felt that not a moment should be lost in communicating the tidings to the father; and it was arranged that Jacky and his sister should set off by the next railway train, and communicate their joy. This arrangement was carried out. When the daughter first called her father aside from his mates, and then made the simple announcement that Jacky had come home, the old man was overwhelmed with emotion. He felt stunned and blinded; burst into tears; and, when told that Jacky was in a garden near at hand, he went, speechless with amazement, and then, in Scripture language, fell upon his son's neck and wept, exclaiming that God had been good to him in bringing back his long lost son. What made the interview and its accompanying emotions more interesting was, that the father was one of those who had recently been subject to devout influences, in consequence of a revival movement in the village. The brother was next sent for; and after they had all met, it being then Saturday, the family returned home to enjoy their Sabbath in peace, and in one another's company. During this journey of Jacky to Dunbar, nearly all the absent villagers of Cockenzie had returned, and been made partakers of the glad tidings. The more they talked about the event, and about the details of the wonderful deliverance, their excitement increased; and on the arrival of the father and son it broke forth afresh into a public demonstration. The family were escorted back amid tumultuous murmurs of congratulation, and an eager exchange of questions.

Next day was Sabbath; and a greater congregation than usual attended Divine service to join in public thanksgiving for what had been done. As is the custom on remarkable family occasions, the clergyman, in the prayers of the day, alluded to the engrossing topic, and

offered up the thanks of the congregation for the wonders he had done in the great deep, in watching over the life of one of their number then present, and delivering him from the peril of shipwreck, banishment, and imminent death, and finally restoring him to his home and his friends. In the evening the father attended a prayer meeting in which he himself was accustomed to take a part; and on this occasion, at the request of the minister, the father offered up a special prayer. He could not choose but allude to the singular mercy and conspicuous cause for gratitude he had in his own person experienced during the preceding day; and while in simple language he spoke of the long years of sorrow and uncertainty that had passed while he mourned for his lost son, and when thoughts of the boy's mother also intervened, who had never ceased to pine throughout the long years of his absence, the old man's voice faltered, and he wept. The son, who was present, also wept audibly. Then the infection spread from one to another, until all more or less were sobbing; and thus Jacky's return was embalmed in the tears of the entire people.

It was only after exciting scenes like these that there was time to gather the thread of Jacky's adventures since he first left his native village. From his earliest youth he had caught the spirit of adventure, had a desire to see the great world beyond the sea, and became gradually impatient at the confinement of his home. His ambition was to join some ship, and to pursue her fortunes round the world; and he no doubt figured to himself the consequence that would attach to him when he should return from distant shores, rehearse his adventures, and show some of the spoils he should have secured. It was not long before an opportunity offered for gratifying this ambition. A gentleman in the neighbourhood, of great nautical taste and spirit, had fitted out a vessel for the Australian trade, and was in want of a few hands such as the village could supply. Jacky put in his claim, and was one of those selected as an apprentice. His joy was complete when this arrangement was concluded, and he embarked in the highest spirits in the new ship. While the novelty of his position lasted, he was well pleased; but gradually a sense of irksomeness grew upon him before the first voyage was terminated. To be summoned aloft in stormy weather, to have hard words and strict discipline, galled his disposition; and, after long nursing in secret his rebellious thoughts, he conceived at last the bold idea of making his escape from the ship. He took into his confidence one of his mates, called Dickson, who partly sympathized with this resolution. Accordingly, one night, while Dickson and he alone kept watch, they espied a barge at no great distance from the Australian shore. Jacky announced his determination then and there to make his escape; and, after charging Dickson to keep his secret, plunged from the vessel's side, and made his way to land. Dickson did not divulge all he knew to the captain about Jacky's proceedings. All that he could be got to say was, that at a particular time he missed Jacky; which was so far true, and there was none able to say more. Dickson died soon after, and the secret perished with him. Meanwhile the news reached Jacky's parents that Jacky was missing; and, though it was necessarily ambiguous, it was received with gloomy forebodings. Year after year passed, and no tidings came of him; and the worst was gradually assumed to be too true. His mother, after many years of hoping against hope, died. His father, after an interval, married a second time; and at the date of Jacky's return, as above described, sixteen years had passed. But to return to Jacky's personal narrative.

When Jacky Barbour dropped from the ship's side in Australian waters, he contrived to reach the shore in safety, and his first thoughts were to make sure that he should not be recaptured. With this view he journeyed in an opposite direction to that where the vessel was about to touch. He kept for some time in concealment, and after a safe interval engaged himself to a ship which traded between Sydney and other parts of Australia. For three years he was occupied in this and similar employment. During that period he had written home three times; but, never receiving any answer, he ceased to write. He next entered into an engagement with a whaling ship, which was bound from Sydney to the Pacific, with twenty-five hands on board. The vessel was staunch and well equipped; but in the course of her voyage, when nearing the equator in the dead of night, in a deep haze, she struck on a rock with such violence that she fell to pieces in a few minutes. Several of the crew were in bed at the time; but in the brief space which intervened between the first shock and the fatal issue, they contrived to escape, some of them half-dressed, and nearly all succeeded in reaching the shore. As day dawned, their first thought was whether any part of the vessel was in sight; but not a vestige was visible. They found that she had struck on a headland, where the tide raged violently, and swept everything before it. This was the more unfortunate, for they had nothing but the clothes upon their back, and even these were scanty in some instances. Having satisfied themselves that nothing could be saved from the wreck, they turned their attention towards the land, and the strange quarters in which they found themselves. After comparing notes together, they concluded that they must have been wrecked on one of the Fiji group of islands. They at once directed their attention towards the state of the island, and the chances they had of supporting life. They reconnoitred the country on all sides, and found that the island was about ten miles in circumference, thickly wooded towards the sea, but more open towards the centre. Towards the west the coast was bold and precipitous, while to the east it sloped gradually. There was abundance of fruit-trees wherever they turned. The cocoa and plantain trees were particularly exuberant. Pine-apples also abounded, and under the surface of the ground were found yams, not to mention many trees and fruits which they could not name and identify. In the centre of the island rose a peak or eminence from which smoke issued, and which proved to be a volcano not altogether extinct. In course of time they found no limit to the abundance of fruits. The island was covered with the most refreshing verdure. The temperature was equable and delightful.

It was not long, however, before they discovered that the island was inhabited; and this circumstance, especially at first, gave rise to no small anxiety. A little watching disclosed numerous groups of human beings moving to and fro near the interior, all of whom, from the youngest to the oldest, were entirely naked. It was by degrees computed that the native population could not be less than about six hundred. They were apparently in the lowest state of civilization. They had no canoes—no iron—no weapons—no implements of any kind except a few rude poles of wood—not even the use of fire. They had no villages, but merely places of rendezvous where they congregated. They lay on mattings under the trees, and passed much of their time in indolent repose, under shelter from the rays of the sun. They satisfied their material wants without an effort, and apparently had no motive to impel them to action. The only acts approaching to any semblance of worship

consisted in their falling on their faces before the trees, and muttering some language of their own. The only approach to active life, or rather to a pastime, was their practice of spearing fish, which they pursued not unskillfully by means of a rude wooden pole, sharpened at the point and tipped with a piece of harder texture, which they hurled from some projecting rock, and then dived for the prey.

While natural curiosity and self-interest impelled the shipwrecked mariners to watch these proceedings and study the character of the natives, it was so far fortunate that from the first the two parties established amicable relations. They both seemed to have a proper respect or fear for each other. On the one side it was the fear of numbers, and the consciousness of having no weapons of offence or defence in the event of hostilities. On the other side it was probably the instinctive fear of a different race of beings whose powers were unknown, whose skins were white, and whose tattered garments, though sufficiently despicable in Europe, may have suggested unknown meanings and inspired profound respect in Fiji. Hence both parties acted on the implied understanding that if they did not molest they would not be molested; and so the *entente cordiale* was kept up without a single misunderstanding, and neither party intruded on the territory of the other.

So far, therefore, as these foreign relations were concerned, the case of the mariners was tolerably fortunate; but, as regarded their home affairs, and their interior economy, a very different picture presented itself. First and foremost, they were to a certain extent imprisoned, for no land was in sight. They did not exactly know where they were. They could get no information from the natives, and they sought none. They had fruits in abundance, but nothing else to live upon. There were no four-footed animals in the island—at least they saw none. Not even birds were visible, except now and then a sea-gull, which screamed overhead, and departed quickly, leaving the solitude more solitary still. Insect life alone abounded. To subsist on raw fruits only was found to be unwholesome, and some of the sailors soon became sick and wan. They craved for food which they could not obtain. The only change in the monotony of the diet was the occasional burying of a yam for a few hours in the hot scoræ of the volcano, with a view to cook it; and sometimes, but rarely, they obtained a present of a fish from the natives, which they dressed in the same imperfect manner. From the first their main reliance was on seeing some vessel come in sight to deliver them; but days, months, and years passed by, and not a sail speckled the horizon. They would fain have left the island if they could have found the means; but they had no canoe, nor the hope of making one. They had no instrument, no saw, no knife, no hatchet; and even if they had had these, they would have been afraid to cut down the trees, seeing that the natives might resent this as desecration. Even if they had had a raft, they knew not in what direction to steer. Every chance of departure was thus cut off, and the elements of civilization taken out of their hands. To add to their isolation, they had not a book, not a Bible to cheer them. It was even a misfortune that they had not to toil for their daily food; for in that healthful exercise their minds would, for a certain time at least, have been diverted from inly gnawing cares. The earth spontaneously yielded fruits, and thus took away the motive of bodily exertion. They at first endeavoured to beguile the long hours with narrating to each other all the circumstances of their previous life, the adventures they had experienced, and the people they had met; but even this pastime grew stale, as the

incidents became familiar by repetition. To complete their misfortunes, they had at an early stage lost all reckoning of time; the days of the week, the month and year were forgotten, or if they had once painfully calculated it, they soon lost their reckoning; and, once losing it, they were too pre-occupied with other cares, or too apathetic to continue it. The only occupation they had, and in which they zealously engaged, was scanning the horizon in search of a sail; but as months and years passed without a gleam of success, even that occupation became monotonous and irksome. To crown their misery, they were themselves only imperfectly educated. Their minds having never been much cultivated, the men had no mental resources to fall back upon. Without any material help, their intellects became sensibly enfeebled, and their condition more and more wretched every day.

All these circumstances soon began to tell upon the physical constitution of the mariners. They became moody, listless, apathetic; then insatiable longings for home, and for the enjoyments, simple though they might be, of their earlier days, grew insupportable. They pined and fretted with unutterable yearnings; they felt a hidden want not to be repressed, and which their condition gave no hopes of relieving. Though at first their number was twenty-five, yet, after the lapse of a few years, under the enervating life of disappointment and *ennui*, the physical constitution of some of the men gave way; and one by one they succumbed, till only thirteen remained. A poor fellow, wan and emaciated, would lie down and refuse to be comforted. His companions, only a little less dejected than himself, would surround him with cheering words, and suggesting that hope which comes to all men, but which was so long in coming to them. They would bring him the choicest fruits they could select, and perform little offices of tenderness; but nothing could rally the sufferer from the fell disease of a broken heart. At length death approached, and with his last words the dying man strictly charged the survivors (and while doing this the only lingering gleam of vigour returned to his frame,) that, if ever they should be spared to return home, they would seek out his relatives, and tell them of his last sad fate. The survivors would then close his eyes in peace, each inwardly foreseeing that his own days were numbered, and must soon end in the same desolate condition, and half envious of the lot of the dead.

One circumstance, and which reflects no small honour on human nature, deserves to be recorded; and that was, that however much they quarrelled and exchanged hard words while they were afloat, from the moment they were wrecked their harmony was never interrupted. Neither cursing nor swearing was heard among them. Some of them were known to be regular in their devotions. A common sense of their misfortune and mutual dependence, and the presence of imminent danger, no doubt subdued their evil passions, solemnized their minds, and made them bear with each other's infirmities, and knit them together in the bond of brotherhood. How far memory served to recall any religious teaching or impression of early years does not appear; but Jacky said that some of them spoke as if the solemn truths of religion were present to their minds.

After many years of intolerable anxiety and watching (they then knew not how many, for they had lost all reckoning of time), the happy day at length arrived to those of them who survived. Jacky Barbour was then beginning to feel his constitution sensibly impaired, and had concluded he must be at least fifty years of age, when a sail one morning hove in sight, and drove the

company delirious. The strange ship was even near at hand when first discovered. The hearts of the men beat quickly, and a few of them swooned under the sudden excitement. Jacky Barbour, when first informed of it, became dizzy and blind, and remembered nothing more till he found himself a day or two afterwards in reality on deck and at sea. He was then informed that one of his comrades had hoisted a piece of matting on a cocoa-nut tree, which the ship descried, and sent a boat ashore which took in the weary and heartbroken crew, who were rather the ghosts of men than real flesh and blood. Yet, by judicious management their health soon recovered under the inspiring circumstances of their release. The men, on reviving, were then told that they were right in their surmise, that they had been on Cocoa-nut Island, one of the Fiji group, and that they had been there only nine years—a shortness of time which not a little surprised them all. Jacky Barbour, who had felt at least fifty, was thereupon relieved from an intolerable anxiety, as if he had obtained a clear gift of twenty years of life. It deserves also to be recorded that the day of deliverance, which was so happy a day for the desolate guests of Cocoa-nut Island, was equally welcomed by their hosts, the Fijians; who, the moment they witnessed the departure of the ship carrying their late neighbours away, gave expression to the most frantic demonstrations of joy, dancing and shouting as if they had conquered their most powerful enemy—a demonstration which they kept up till the vessel was out of sight.

The rest of the story is soon told. The vessel that relieved the imprisoned castaways was the "Irish Girl," a schooner, bound for California. Jacky Barbour and his comrades were clothed by the munificence of the crew, and he worked for a year and a half at the diggings in California, till he made sufficient money to pay his passage home, when, being seized with a strong desire to see his native village and the friends he had there, he carried out his purpose with the result and in the circumstances already described.

A CAT FOILED BY REDSTARTS.

A PAIR of confiding redstarts have built their nest in a crevice of an old mulberry tree, a few feet from my window, and have thus given me a better opportunity of watching their proceedings than is generally obtained. It has been remarked that these birds are very shy and cautious over their nests; but this character is not developed (at any rate, it was not with my redstarts) till the completion of the nest and the laying of the first egg. Up to that time everything had been conducted without the slightest attempt at concealment, or with any further shyness than was indicated by the birds flying off the tree to the distance of a few yards when I came immediately beneath it. I tried to gain their esteem by supplying them with materials for their nest; but it was in vain that they were tempted with the brightest Berlin wools: they would not take so much notice as to be afraid of them; the softest down, the most available bunches of fine tow—none of these would they accept as substitutes for the moss, bents, hairs, and feathers which all redstarts have used from time immemorial. The only novelty which I could get them to introduce was a small quantity of bird's-eye tobacco; but of that even they took so very little, that I suppose it was done more out of compliment to me, and partly, perhaps, for the sake of the name than from any real liking for the Indian weed.

All my attentions, however, were not sufficient to

convince them that they might lay aside their habits of caution when the proper moment arrived for exercising them. One morning, on looking into the nest, I caught sight of the first egg, and since then I have hardly seen the birds at all. Five eggs were laid in as many days, and now (the 19th of May is the date in my journal) the hen is sitting; but she and the cock hardly ever show themselves in any part of the garden; whereas before, I could seldom look out of the window without seeing one or both hopping about the grass or perching on the tree.

But this morning a sudden change came over them. As I was sitting at breakfast I heard a loud cry of distress from a bird, and, looking up, I saw the cock redstart fluttering about the tree in a great state of agitation. The cause of this was soon revealed; there was a white cat on the tree, peeping into the hole where the nest was built. The hen had escaped and was sitting silent and motionless upon a branch on the opposite side of the tree, while the cock was screaming and fluttering about to draw the cat's attention to himself. In this he soon succeeded; and the cat, leaving her unsatisfactory inspection of five blue eggs, turned in pursuit of "a bird in the bush," which seemed as if it would form an easy prey. She mounted the branch on the end of which he was perched, with all his wits about him, though apparently distracted. He waited till she had got dangerously near him, when he dashed close past her face into another branch. Puss descended leisurely, and again pursued him; he lured her on almost to the extremity (reminding me of Friday and the bear in "Robinson Crusoe"), and then flitted to another bough. The cat bit the twigs for spite, and recommenced her pursuit. This game went on for some minutes, puss continually foiled by the bird, which flitted so rapidly, that, when she had made her last spring but one, and thought she had her victim safe, she found herself gazing upon vacancy, the little bird having conjured itself away to the opposite side of the tree unobserved.

Now puss began to get somewhat tired with her exertions, sat down on a bough, licked her unsuccessful paws, and scratched her puzzled head. Whether or no it was that the birds perceived their assailant to be getting fatigued, I cannot say; but they redoubled their exertions; the hen, which had previously taken no part in the proceedings, but had watched her lord's manoeuvres unobserved in silence, now began to utter loud cries, and dare the cat to pursue her. First on one side, then on the other, before and behind, the brave little birds kept enticing puss up and down the branches all over the tree, keeping just out of reach of her greedy claws, till she began to think *herself* the ill-used party; and, having been drawn on among some twigs at the end of the bough nearest to the window, she caught sight of me watching her fruitless labours, and mewed piteously in my face, as much as to say, "Look at these abominable little birds: what business have they to tease a poor cat?" After jumping and climbing about the tree for nearly a quarter of an hour, she was quite tired.

The redstarts had succeeded in their endeavours, and by their ingenious policy had worn out the strength and patience of their enemy, who, reluctantly descending the tree, came mewing to the window, and rubbing herself up against it, as if to claim sympathy in her want of success. The window was opened, when out jumped a little dog, which had been lying in wait, and, with him at her heels, away scampered puss, who was thus enabled to compare (at the interval of a few seconds,) the comparative agreeableness, or disagreeableness, of an unsuccessful chase to pursuer and pursued.

RAMBLES OF AN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL INSPECTOR.

XIII.—THE KNEELING SCHOLARS AND THE LEARNED MISTRESS.

In one of my tours of inspection I sought, for some time in vain, a school recently established at the diggings. Amidst the multitude of tents, pitched here and there, with no pretence to regularity, it is difficult enough to distinguish one rise of canvas from another. A particular murmuring sound caught my ear and led me to the school tent.

Drawing aside the curtain front, I entered a place which somewhat astonished me, accustomed as I was to rude colonial practices. The structure was of thin calico, stretched upon a few poles freshly cut from the forest. The sun's glare came most unpleasantly through the roof and sides of semi-transparent substance. The temperature inside was close to 100°. The floor was the diggings dust, which rose at every movement, and spread as a light cloud through the space.

About fifty girls were gathered in a tent about twenty feet long by twelve broad. They were either from the sister isle or descendants of those who emigrated thence. A noisier lot of young folks it would be difficult to find in a school. They had quite the free and independent manner of the free and independent gold-fields. Maidenly modesty and gentleness of demeanour did not appear the prevailing features. The presence of the inspector operated but slightly in checking the hilarity and chatting of these lively lasses.

Glancing quietly around, I was much amused at an illustration of pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. While the majority had nothing to do but to pass the time as merrily and as lazily as they could—for there seemed nothing for them to do—others were trying to accomplish the difficult feat of writing without a desk. Some of them knelt down in the dust and made use of the form to write upon. The condition of their dress and persons may be conjectured. There was one advantage in their condition: they wanted no blotting paper before turning a page, as the dust flying about in the room, as well as the high temperature, soon dried the letters. A few girls, who did not like the penance of kneeling, were endeavouring to sketch out a copy with the book in their lap. The occupation of the few little forms as writing-desks obliged others in the school to sit in the dust as they could.

Had my call been in the winter instead of the summer, there would have been the exposure of the poor children to the inclemency of the season in that calico tent, with the wind having free course in all directions, and the floor would have been mud instead of dust. The pursuit of knowledge would then have been under still greater difficulties.

It was useless attempting an examination under these circumstances. I contented myself with general questions, and the delivery of a lesson to the whole. The mistress appeared by no means disconcerted; of an easy, *laissez-faire* disposition, with no morbid sense of order and no expectations of perfection, she took things as they came, made no bother about trifles, and quite expected me to take matters as coolly and as satisfactorily as she did.

Her want of precision, however, was illustrated in a mode that was a little beyond the irregular, and which could not be so easily overlooked as the disorder and neglect of the school, which partly arose from circumstances beyond her control. Desks and floors, books and slates, were not very come-at-able things at a new diggings. Her own financial affairs did not warrant

much expenditure, and people were too busy gold hunting and drinking to heed the wants of children, though their own, unless in the bread-and-butter line. But she could find no apology for another bit of negligence. By rule, in order to insure government support, the roll of attendance must be marked each day, the names being called morning and afternoon. Upon inspecting this official document, which, by the way, was finger-marked and dust-stained, like the girls' copybooks, I was surprised to find no blank spaces.

It was necessary to make a few inquiries.

"Do you mark the attendance of the scholars?" said I.

"Certainly," she replied; adding, with true Irish tact, "Don't you see the crosses on the paper?"

"Yes," I observed; "but that does not quite satisfy me; I see every child is marked as being present every day during the last month. I never saw such extraordinary regularity of attendance anywhere else, and particularly on the diggings."

It did not suit her to understand me; so she simply asked me whether the spaces were not intended to be filled up. Although persuaded she knew better, I attempted to show that the mark was to be put only when the child was present. With a merry laugh, and a confident toss of her head, she turned away, exclaiming—

"An sure, if they were not there, they ought to have been."

Some further illustrations of this young lady's character came out, when I succeeded, after some vain attempts, in getting her attendance upon me for examination as to her own scholastic proficiency. It is usual for the ministers of the various denominations to make the appointment of teachers, subject to the approval of the inspector after undergoing examination. As it sometimes happened, in a large district, that the inspector was unable to visit distant places but at long intervals of time, an improper person might continue in charge of a school under an indifferent or over-indulgent clergyman.

At this particular station I had two ladies before me, both irregularly kept in their situations by weak or excessively benevolent ministers of very opposite creeds.

The two mistresses were to be subjected to examination in reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography, and grammar. At the outset, one gave in upon the last two subjects, as she had never learned anything about them. My young Irish friend was quite sure of passing. After calling prepositions nouns, placing the Danube in America, and making Madrid the capital of Russia, I was forced to explain that her knowledge in those branches of study was rather defective. At this news she pretended to be greatly surprised and somewhat ill-tempered.

Unfortunately, with the progress of the examination the improvement was not satisfactory. Orthography was a sore trial to both of them. My sharp friend could not see why her way of spelling was not quite as much to the purpose as the dictionary mode. Arithmetic, too common a foe to female peace of mind, was a provoking bore to these schoolmistresses. Setting one of the ladies an easy sum in simple multiplication, I was struck with the long and anxious gaze bestowed upon the figures. Suddenly turning my head round, I observed the puzzled one at her bag, and was informed, in answer to my inquiry, that she was only looking for her table book.

Such are some of the teachers on whom the training of the young has to depend in the Australian colonies. But let me now give an agreeable contrast.

XIV.—THE PORTLAND INFANT-SCHOOL.

A whaling adventurer originated this town of Western Victoria. Sixty years ago the Bay of Portland was discovered.

About thirty years ago a merchant of Launceston, in Van Diemen's Land, having heard of fish there, established a whaling station on the western shore of that noble expanse of water. To provide fresh meat for his men, he grazed some sheep and cattle upon the neighbouring pastures.

This unauthorized seizure of public lands—the lands of the *aboriginal* public—resulted in the fortune of the enterprising family and the formation of the township of Portland; when the colony of New South Wales appropriated the new territory of the south, under the name of the province of Port Philip, now the golden colony of Victoria.

Among the schools I came to inspect was a Church of England infant-school there. The building had nothing attractive about it; it was of inadequate size, and unsuitable for the object. But the school furniture—all that was dependent upon the teacher—was complete in character, and thoroughly adapted to circumstances. Pictures were there, illustrative of natural history, mechanical employments, Bible and English history, etc. There were frames, lesson boards, black boards, and the various apparatus of an English infant-school of high position. All this, I found afterwards, had been provided at the expense and personal effort of the teacher alone, and procured with great difficulty for this little school of the far west of Victoria.

Portland, a town of three thousand inhabitants, is a wonderful place for children. With a climate unequalled, perhaps, by any part of the colonies, the little flock thrive admirably. The prettiest children I ever saw in my life were those born at Warnambool and Portland, in Western Victoria. Plump and fair, with regular features, good-humoured smiles, and bright, intelligent eyes, they attract the notice of all travellers.

Far out of the track of modern civilization, and remote from the stimulus of the diggings, Portland has happily escaped the excitement and misery elsewhere known, and has not been invaded, as Melbourne, by new-comers. There is a settled, happy, virtuous community established there, with more educational and moral advantages than any place of its size I know. All the religious bodies are represented there: the Presbyterians and Wesleyans being most influential for numbers, though the Episcopalians pretty well engross the schools, through the long residence of the minister of the Church of England.

Very little intemperance exists in the town, and poverty has seldom been known. If not generally rich, the people are comfortable, and are wise enough to stay happily at home in their healthy Portland, rather than tempt Fortune at the mines. The children, therefore, may be imagined to be superior in dress and general appearance to those of other colonial settlements. The Sunday-schools, like the day-schools, seem to include every child in the place. One institution is in especial favour among them—the Bands of Hope.

I recognised, however, in this infant-school on the outskirts of the town, an intelligence and a respectability above the average. The *infants*, however, ranged a little higher in age than usual. Personal cleanliness and neatness formed a marked feature about them all. I fancied afterwards that the very high character of their training in school gave them a superior taste and propriety in dress and the disposition of their little ornaments. There was certainly an ease of manner and softness of expression, an intelligence of language, that I never met

with in any other public school in the colonies. With the perfection of discipline, there was no more restraint observable than in a well-ordered and united family.

The mistress was a young woman of prepossessing appearance, combining a calm and dignified bearing with the sweetest of tones and the utmost benignity of regard. Her countenance assured me at a glance of her personal qualifications for her office.

Wishing to make some quiet observations before commencing my inspection, I told my clerical friend to let the school go on as usual. The teacher soon after gave an "Object" lesson. I have known some able masters and mistresses during my lengthened experience in England and the colonies, and consider myself qualified to judge upon the merits of teaching; but here I was placed before one who, for tact in illustration, power of control, ability to communicate, and magnetic influence upon a class, proved herself equal to the most accomplished teachers I had ever known. I listened with most excited interest.

But my pleasure was increased as the lesson gradually assumed a moral phase, and the rapt audience of little ones heard her soft voice tell them to love one another as Jesus so loved them. Here her genius—for such it was—shone forth brighter than ever, and proved her highest qualifications. There was no excitement, no straining after effect, no dazzling illustrations, no stirring appeal: it was simple, natural, moving eloquence.

It was necessary to come another day to conduct my examination. Thorough teaching was the distinguishing feature of the school, the writing and reading receiving great attention. The enunciation of the English could not be surpassed for correctness in any school of my district, even with pupils much more advanced in age. The mental arithmetic was taught upon the Pestalozzian method. The geography was equal to that of superior schools. A large amount of scientific information was communicated after the Birkbeck system, so called.

The mistress was aided by senior scholars, who received extra instruction out of regular hours. Trained under such a person, they were accomplished teachers; they imitated their dear governess no less in her loving nature than her intellectual ability. It was agreeable to hear them address their class in terms of endearment and with looks of quiet gentleness.

I was particularly struck with a class of tiny ones, two or three years old, who were under a little mistress who confessed to being *just five*. There was no pushing, no frowning, no scolding; but with a face gleaming with intelligence and affection, the lesson was given to the delighted circle. In attempts to gain attention and impress an idea, the sparkling little monitor would kneel down before one of her class, pat its dimpled cheeks, and, in a sweet, easy manner, try and make the juvenile comprehend her meaning.

I pointed to the word "eel" on the board, and said, "Do they know what an eel is?" My young friend immediately set to work and talked the class into the question. Did they know what a fish was? Yes. Well, the eel was a sort of fish. Had they seen a whale in the bay? One of them had. Well, an eel was not a whale; but had they seen a snake brought from the bush? Yes. Well, then, an eel was a *snake-fish*, they were told.

As I have had to chronicle some of the difficulties of public instruction in Australia, and tell a story of the inefficiency of many of our schools there, such a narrative as this of the Portland infant-school will show that, even in the new land of the Southern Ocean, good teachers are to be found, true to their calling, and the best friends to a new colony.